

KENTUCKY ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT – REVISED

Based on Alternate Achievement Standards

2008-09 ADMINISTRATION GUIDE

for

OVERVIEW



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Overview of the Test Design

The Kentucky Alternate Assessment Program (KAAP) was the result of comprehensive Kentucky education reform in 1990. An accountability system was established as part of the reform, setting a goal for all students in Kentucky to reach a level of proficiency on learning goals and academic expectations by 2014. The purpose of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) is to encourage and enable educators in each public school to increase the academic achievement of their students. It is designed to improve teaching and student learning in Kentucky. Kentucky included all students in this accountability system, allowing students with disabilities to participate in one of three ways - general assessment without accommodations, general assessment with accommodations, and in the alternate assessment.

The alternate assessment allowed students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to be included in the accountability program. The increased requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (PL107-110) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 (PL 105-17) and the more recent 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) (PL 108-446) have necessitated extensive revisions to the alternate assessment. These revisions have been carefully considered based on existing knowledge of effective practice and extensive stakeholder involvement and contribution. Assessment content and design teams began meeting in the summer of 2005. These work groups sought to consider the highest achievement standard possible for this population while carefully balancing the regulatory requirements with the individual needs of the students.

This administration guide provides an overview of the test design for all of the alternate assessments. Included is: participation guidelines, administration guidelines, scoring criteria, performance standards, , implications for the Individualized Education Program (IEP), and guidelines for the Attainment Tasks and Transition Attainment Records.

Scoring

The Alternate Assessment Portfolio-Revised is scored using an analytic scoring process. Analytic scoring assigns numerical values to the scoring criteria in the areas of performance, complexity, and support. Each assessment target will receive score points assigned in the scoring sub-scores, then combined to provide the overall score for each content area. Once all the scores have been calculated, the proficiency levels (novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished) are assigned based on cut scores, determined through a formal standard setting process.

The Attainment Tasks in each content area are scored by the student's classroom teacher who is trained to administer and score the assessment. For each task the teacher records the students' choice in a series of multiple choice questions. The student is given a total score for each content area assessed. The total score is then assigned a proficiency level that is established based on cut scores that are determined through a formal standard setting process.

The Transition Attainment Record is a checklist of skills and knowledge in each content area. The student's IEP team records a score of 0 - 2. "2" indicates the student can perform the skill independently, "1" indicates the student's performance is developing or requires supports from others, and "0" indicates that the student does not demonstrate performance on the skill.

All teachers must complete the Administration Code Inclusion training, and alternate assessment trainings following state and district procedures. The alternate assessment process includes completing the required training modules: Assessment Overview, Portfolio, Attainment Tasks, and Transition Attainment Record (www.kde.state.ky.us) and completing the online quizzes. The completed quiz must be printed with one copy placed in the AAAP.

Assessment Components

The Kentucky Alternate Assessment will include 3 major components:

- I. KY Alternate Assessment Portfolio- Revised*
- II. KY Attainment Tasks*
- III. KY Transition Attainment Record*

The *KY Alternate Assessment Portfolio- Revised* for reading, mathematics and science is designed to comply with the high technical quality standards in the requirements of NCLB. Portfolio assessment targets are provided by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). The teacher designs the assessment probes and provides the instruction. Trained scorers will score the portfolios.

The *KY Attainment Tasks* and *Transition Attainment Record* will meet the IDEA requirements including the recently legislated ACT. Both the *KY Attainment Tasks* and *Transition Attainment Record* are provided by KDE. They are administered and scored by the test administrator (i.e., certified teacher). The Transition Attainment Record can be administered when posted on the web (www.kde.state.ky.us – Quick Links – Kentucky Alternate Assessment Program) in mid-September. The Attainment Tasks are scheduled for administration in the *Spring of 2009*. Table 1 on the following page outlines these requirements by grade:

Table 1: CATS 2008 – 2009 – ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

	Mirror for KCCT							Mirror for EXPLORE/PLAN/ACT
Grade	Reading	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Arts & Humanities	Practical Living/ Voc. Studies	Writing	English, Mathematics, Science, Reading
End of Primary (grade 3)	P	P						
4	P	P	P			AT	AT	
5	P	P		AT	AT		AT	
6	P	P						
7	P	P	P			AT	AT	
8	P	P		AT	AT		AT	Transition Attainment Record in English, Mathematics, Science, Reading
9								
10	P					AT		Transition Attainment Record in English, Mathematics, Science, Reading
11		P	P	AT	AT			Transition Attainment Record in English, Mathematics, Science, Reading
12							AT	

LEGEND:

P = Portfolio

AT = Attainment Tasks

Grade Level Requirements

The requirements table for all grade levels is located in Appendix A. **Table 2** is an example of the Grade 3 requirements. The core content standards (e.g., MA-EP-1.2.1, RD-EP-1.0.3) are specified for those required for students who participate in Performance Dimensions A. The asterisk (*) denotes the content standards required for Performance Dimension B.

Table 2: Grade Level Requirements

Grades		Assessed Content Areas		Observation /Evidence
3	Math	Reading	Science	
Standards	MA-EP-1.2.1	*RD-EP-1.0.3		<p>Performance Dimension A must address all five assessment targets in each assessed content area for the student's assigned grade.</p> <p>Performance Dimension B must address the three assessment targets marked with an asterisk (*) in each assessed content area for the student's assigned grade.</p> <p>Required Assessment Probes: Four assessment probes consisting of one prior to instruction and three at the end of the instructional period are required for each assessment target. <i>*New for 2008-2009 and beyond, any assessment probe administered after instruction concludes scoring a 90% or above may use that score to represent the highest probe and cease any further assessment probe administration.</i></p> <p>Work Sample: One piece of student work that addresses the assessment target for each assessed standard.</p>
	*MA-EP-2.1.1	RD-EP-1.0.5		
	*MA-EP-3.1.2	*RD-EP-2.0.2		
	*MA-EP-4.1.1	RD-EP-2.0.5		
	MA-EP-5.3.1	*RD-EP-3.0.4		

Participation Guidelines

Participation in the assessment and accountability system is an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team decision and as such, should be based on the individual needs of the student. The *Participation Guidelines* below are designed to assist the IEP team in determining *how* the student will participate in the statewide assessment and school accountability system. These guidelines are in the current (703 KAR:5:070) and as such have not changed from previous versions of the KY Alternate Assessment. However, to accommodate learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities, two additional questions should be considered. These are included in part two of the guidelines and assist the IEP team in selecting the appropriate Performance Dimension. In addition, recent regulatory changes refer to a “certificate of attainment” (704 KAR:3:305) rather than “certificate of program completion” referred to in previous versions of the assessment. Finally, these participation guidelines apply to the entire alternate assessment system including all the assessment components specified in the *Overview of the Assessment Design* (p.3).

It is important to note that placement should not determine participation in the alternate assessment, nor should participation in the alternate assessment determine placement.

The Participation Guidelines for the Kentucky Alternate Assessment Program include a two-part process. First, the IEP team must consider each of the items below and answer “YES” to ALL statements to determine if the student will participate in the Kentucky Alternate Assessments. Then, the IEP team must select Performance Dimension A or Performance Dimension B of the scoring rubric. A form that can be used to document the IEP team decision can be found in Appendix B.

Participation Guidelines

Instructions: 1) Answer “Yes” to all of the following statements and 2) select the Performance Dimension based on the descriptors provided.

Part 1:

The student’s demonstrated cognitive ability and adaptive behavior itself prevents completion of the general education course of study even with program modifications and/or accommodations;

The student’s current adaptive behavior requires extensive direct instruction in multiple settings to accomplish the application and transfer of skills necessary in school, work, home, and community environments;

The student’s inability to complete the course of study may not be the result of excessive

or extended absences; or it may not be primarily the result of visual or auditory disabilities, specific learning disabilities, emotional-behavioral disabilities, or social, cultural, and economic differences;

The student is unable to apply or use academic skills at a minimal competency level in natural settings (i.e., home, community, or work site) when instructed solely or primarily through school-based instruction;

The student is unable to acquire, maintain, generalize skills, and demonstrate performance without intensive, frequent, and individualized community-based instruction;

and

For a student with disabilities who is age-equivalent to an 12th grader, 18 years old, or who is in his/her last anticipated year of school (see Section 1, B.2), the student is unable to complete a regular diploma program even with extended schooling, program modifications, and accommodations.

Part 2:

The IEP team must select one of the following: Performance Dimension A or Performance Dimension B using the specified indicators.

Performance Dimension A: Attainment should be chosen if the student's communication is best described by the following indicators:

- Student uses verbal or written words, signs, Braille, or language-based augmentative systems to request, initiate, and respond to questions, describe things or events, and express refusal.

OR

- Student uses intentional communication, but not at a symbolic language level: Student uses understandable communication through such modes as gestures, pictures, objects/textures, points, etc., to clearly express a variety of intentions.

Performance Dimension B: Progress *may* be chosen if the student's communication is best described by the following indicators. While students who participate in Performance Dimension B may be able to score at the proficient level, distinguished scores are *not* available if this performance dimension is chosen.

- Student communicates primarily through cries, facial expressions, change in muscle tone but no clear use of objects/textures, regularized gestures, pictures, signs, etc. to communicate.

- Student alerts to sensory input from another person (auditory, visual, touch, movement) BUT requires actual physical assistance to follow simple directions or the student's response to sensory stimuli (e.g., sound/voice; sight/gesture; touch; movement; smell) is unclear.

Participation in Performance Dimension B: Progress requires a formal IEP or ARC team meeting.

The IEP team may decide to assess a student who communicates as described for Performance Dimension B using Performance Dimension A requirements and cut scores.

Grade Placement

Students should move from grade to grade each year along with same age peers. A student may repeat a grade which would be considered a retention requiring the student to repeat that specific grade level assessment(s).

If a student moves into a district without a grade placement, he/she should be placed into a grade with students of the same age. The student should be no more than two years older than peers in the same grade.

A student should be assessed at the same grade at which he/she is listed on the attendance roster. Once a student has completed all assessment requirements through grade 12, he/she can be placed into Grade 14 on attendance rosters and focus on transition with not more accountability assessment administration required.

Alternate Assessment Accountability Folder (AAAF)

As part of the new Kentucky Alternate Assessment Program (KAAP), the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) shall require each teacher to maintain an Alternate Assessment Accountability Folder (AAAF) for each student participating in the KAAP. This folder will support the submitted alternate assessments and can be used by the KDE for potential audits and observations of student work leading to the submission of an alternate assessment. The contents of the AAAF are expected to address all the alternate assessment requirements for the student's grade level. Items that should be included in the AAAF are:

Portfolio documentation:

- raw data on measurable/observable skill for assessment probes
- baseline assessment probe and the three probes that followed
- anecdotal notes
- a photocopy of the original portfolios

Attainment Task documentation:

- original completed Attainment Task document
- work developed as part of Attainment Tasks

- anecdotal notes

Transition Attainment Record documentation:

- documentation concerning meeting held to complete the record (i.e., who, where, when)
- anecdotal notes
- location where the support documentation is stored (e.g., IEP data in Due Process Folder)
- original completed Transition Attainment Record document

Storage of the CATS Alternate Assessment Accountability Folder:

The AAAF shall be kept at the school of accountability (A-1 school), since the folder is created each year that the student participates in the alternate assessment program. The folder does not move with the student. District-operated, total special education programs (A-3s) can retain the accountability folders and do not have to return them to the A-1 school. Storage of the AAAF shall be in the secure area specified by the district for other confidential information, such as the IEP. The AAAF must be maintained for two full CATS biennia (four years). This folder must stay intact for each year the student participates in the KAAP. Copies of the AAAF may be provided to parents based on school and district policies.

Achievement Standards

Alternate Achievement Standards must be aligned with the state's academic content standards (i.e., include knowledge and skills that link to grade-level expectations), must promote access to the general curriculum, and must reflect professional judgment of the highest learning standards possible for the group of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. (Standards and Assessment Peer Review Guidance, 2004)

Alternate Achievement Standards are established using the same steps as those used to develop achievement standards for the general assessment. This involves setting performance levels, developing performance descriptors, selecting exemplars, and determining cut scores.

Performance Levels. The Kentucky Alternate Assessment Portfolio - Revised will use the same performance levels used in the general assessment: Distinguished, Proficient, Apprentice, and Novice.

Performance Descriptors were drafted during a series of meetings by teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities, general education content teachers and assessment experts. The descriptors were reformatted and additional details added following scoring of the portfolios. Performance descriptors were written for grades 3 – 8 and 10 for reading, grades 3 – 8 and 11 for math, and grades 4, 7, and 11 for science. The descriptors are aligned to Kentucky's Academic Expectations and linked to the grade level Core Content for Assessment v. 4.1 and are reduced in complexity by:

- allowing adaptations, modifications, and/or assistive technology that assist the student in accessing the information, as well as demonstrating knowledge, skill, and/or concept but do not directly guide the student to the answer;
- reducing the amount or extent of the standard that the student must demonstrate;
- modifying the way in which the student demonstrates the knowledge, skill, and/or concept (e.g., utilizing objects to give the answer); and
- allowing students who are eligible for Performance Dimension B: Progress to demonstrate proficiency on a reduced number of standards.

The complete set of performance descriptors are located in Appendix I.

Exemplar portfolios that represent each level of proficiency were selected during a range-finding session in the spring of 2007. **Achievement Standards are determined by considering the distribution of all the scores from the assessment and establishing cut scores** that match the descriptions of proficiency as described by Novice, Apprentice, Proficient, and Distinguished. Standard setting committees consisting of general and special education teachers from around the state met in the summer of 2007 to recommend cut scores.

The IEP and the Alternate Assessment

Questions often arise regarding the relationship between the IEP and the alternate assessment. There are two federal laws to consider when discussing this relationship. No Child Left Behind: Non-Regulatory Guidance (Alternate Achievement Standards for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities, 2005) provides two reasons that the student's IEP goals are not appropriate measures for annual yearly progress as required by NCLB:

1. IEP goals are designed to meet the individual needs of the student, provide a means to monitor progress and report to parents. And as well as are used to make decisions regarding special education and related services the student receives.
2. Title I requires all students to be assessed in academic content areas of reading, mathematics, and science, while IEP goals may address a broader range of student needs including behavioral and developmental needs.

However, the requirements of IDEA 2004 suggest that it is reasonable for the IEP to support the student in the alternate assessment.

1. IDEA 2004 regulations define specially designed instruction as adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child and to ***ensure access to the general curriculum*** so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that ***apply to all children*** (§300.39(b)(3). [emphasis added]
2. It further requires annual IEP goals to be designed to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum (§300.320(a)(2)(i). (Federal Register 34 CFR Parts 300 and 301, 2003)

The IEP should clarify the specially designed instruction including: adaptations, modifications, and delivery of instruction that support access to the content standards that

are assessed. IEP goals can be designed to move the child toward attainment of the content standards, either by writing specific objectives that address individual standards or by targeting skills that will facilitate learning of the standards (e.g., switch activation that will assist student in accessing information and demonstrating understanding of the standards or number recognition that will help with solving math problems).

CAUTION

The Assessment Targets are provided to guide the development of assessment tasks and as such are not designed to be included verbatim on an IEP. As such the Assessment Targets should NOT be considered or used as a catalog of IEP goals and objectives.

The Kentucky Alternate Assessment Portfolio - Revised does not consider placement as part of the scoring criteria. Where instruction is provided for the student is *entirely* an IEP team decision based on the principles of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

CAUTION

Placement is solely an IEP team decision and should be guided by the individual needs of the student and the principles of the Least Restrictive Environment. The IEP team should consider the placement that best facilitates the student's access to the general curriculum.

Glossary

AAAF: The Alternate Assessment Accountability Folder is a collection of work samples, raw data, assessment probes, notes, etc. that support the submitted alternate assessment. Information contained in the folder may be used for audits by the department of education. It is a confidential and secure file and should be stored accordingly. More information on the AAAF is located in Appendix H.

alignment: The effort to ensure that what teachers teach is in accord with what the curriculum says will be taught and what is assessed on official assessments. The alignment of expectations for student learning with assessments for measuring students' attainment of these expectations is an essential attribute for an effective standards-based education system. Without adequate alignment between standards and assessments, teachers and students become confused about educational expectations. Among other things, this can result in learning expectations being lowered for some students while being raised for others, creating potential inequities.

attainment: completion of a set task (s) or behavior(s); the highest level of achievement on the post test performance with the established baseline being under 50%.

augmentative communication: low, medium or high technology system that assists the student in expressive language (e.g., making a request, initiate, and respond to questions, describe things or events, and express refusal).

certificate of attainment: new terminology in place of Kentucky Certificate of Completion.

DOK (Depth of knowledge): varies on a number of dimensions, including level of cognitive complexity of information students should be expected to know, how well they should be able to transfer this knowledge to different contexts, how well they should be able to form generalizations, and how much prerequisite knowledge they must have in order to grasp ideas.

exemplars: examples chosen to illustrate characteristics of a concept. The term exemplar sometimes refers to samples of student work or assessments used to show specified rubric criteria.

exemplar portfolios: portfolios that represent each level of proficiency and that are selected during a range-finding session.

Learner Characteristics Inventory: a questionnaire that assists the teacher in understanding the individuality of each student in nine areas: expressive communication, receptive communication, hearing, vision, motor, engagement, attendance, reading skills and mathematics skills.

mode of communication: the predominate way a student expresses his or her thoughts (e.g., through words, pictures, objects, tactile cues, augmented communication/assistive technology).

performance descriptors: specific learning expectations, based on the standards, for each content area, grade and level of performance.

performance levels: specific descriptions of performance of a given task at several different levels of quality. Teachers use rubrics to evaluate student performance.

References

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997, PL 105-17,
20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 *et seq.*

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, PL 108-446, 20 U.S.C.
§§1400 *et seq*

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, PL 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425, 20 U.S.C §§ 6301 *et seq.*

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U.S. Department of Education (April 2004). Standards and assessment, peer review
guidance: information and examples for meeting the requirements of No Child
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students with the most significant disabilities, non-regulatory guidance